

Faith Pulse

Answering the Call to Give: A Way of Life for Gloria and Eddie Hill

By **Felecia Diggs**
Special to the Afro

It was after the “Katrina” hurricane disaster in 2005 that Gloria and Eddie Hill heard the call, through Oprah Winfrey, to stretch out in their giving. There was a great need for assistance on the part of those who survived and were displaced by Katrina. As Oprah was building houses on Angel Lane in Houston, Texas, the Hills were moved to join forces with her and respond to “do what you can do,” as Oprah put it. They decided that what they could do was give bicycles to hundreds of children that were now making Houston their new home. The Hills were also amazed and touched by Elves and Moore, a Houston organization that had given away thousands of bikes to kids. Though they were not able to give in the thousands, the Hills were moved to give bikes to the children and to those children, ages 4–16, through high school. Upon graduation from high school, a scholarship would be provided to those who maintained a 3.0 grade point average or above and planned to go on to college. The experience would lead to many “heart-warming stories along the journey” that are too numerous to put in writing, according to Gloria. The Hills are still in touch with many of the people they aided as a result of the Katrina disaster.

It wasn't a new thing for the couple to be involved in charitable work, because as a family, giving was a way of life. Prior to establishing the G&E Hill Foundation, they had donated 25,000 thousand games, toys and bicycles to impoverished children in Baltimore during the 2003 Christmas

season. Giving away bicycles had always been of utmost importance to Gloria, since she wanted one as a child, but never received one. Now, providing emergency relief assistance to survivors of various disasters has become a significant part of the Foundation's ongoing mission, as well.

After listening to many stories from Haiti about the devastating earthquake, the Hills decided to take a trip to Haiti and see the results for themselves. What they found tugged on their heartstrings – many thousands of children had been left as orphans. Gloria, who speaks some French, says she has a “soft spot when it comes to the suffering of others, especially the little children.” In addition to providing relief to the families

there, through their foundation, the Hills partnered with “For His Glory Outreach” (an adoption outreach organization), to set up a sponsorship vehicle to help with the vast number of orphaned children. To date they have gotten sponsorships for about 28 children and are in need of sponsors for 122 (they've just been given another 75 that are in need). They are now available to come to churches and other organizations to speak about the situation in Haiti, offering opportunities to interested persons to sponsor a child. Gloria said, “Our goal is to rescue as many Haitian children as possible that were orphaned by this terrible

earthquake. Our goal is to save them from lives filled with further trauma and hardship.”

To arrange a speaker from the foundation or to get more information on ways of providing support, call 410-922-3521. The Foundation's Benefit Gala is 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nov. 26 at the Pikesville Community Hall.



Eddie and Gloria Hill

Courtesy Photo

Transforming One Life at a Time

By **Ciara Young-Thomas**
AFRO Intern

The Rev. Kevin Hooks and First Lady Jonelle Hooks are two individuals who have a passion for God and giving back to the community. The dynamic couple started Transformation of Life Christian Center earlier this year and aim to serve Baltimore County and the surrounding area. The ministry is based in Randallstown and currently holds services at Old Court Middle School every Sunday at 9 a.m.

Rev. Hooks has always had a passion for the local community, and started serving as a youth coordinator. Transformation of Life Christian Center is non-denominational, and offers a come-as-you-are invitation to services. The

center already has ministries specifically targeted to singles, men, women, married couples and children.

Even though the ministry is in its early stages it has already had the opportunity to be a blessing to the school and the community at large. “The church should be the focal point of the community

“The church should be the focal point of the community like it used to be.” —Rev. Hooks

like it used to be,” Rev. Hooks said. “We want to revive those times through our ministry beyond the walls. Holding services at Old Court Middle School has provided the opportunity for partnership on other levels. “We did a backpack drive in August where we were able to donate 36 backpacks to Old

Court. The blessing of this however, was that 10 of those backpacks went to homeless children,” Rev. Hooks said.

The young pastor's emphasis on the youth is strongly relative to his early beginnings in the ministry. When he was younger he served as a youth coordinator for a local Baptist church.

“Well, I am a youth at heart,” he said. The young pastor's mission with Life Kid's, is to make children feel they have a place in the church. “We wanted to put some emphasis on them as well to make them feel included with the ministry, and what's exciting is that each and every Sunday that we've worshipped these last four weeks, the children have come out of the children's ministry excited [and] ready to come back the next Sunday,” said the pastor. Life Kid's also gives parents and grandparents the opportunity to worship while their children can learn about God at their own pace.

Transformation of Life Christian Center sees itself

not only helping the youth, but partnering with other organizations as well. “And so that's part of our vision, that we're able to partner with not only schools, such as Old Court Middle, but we want to go beyond those four walls and partner with the community as well”, said Hooks.

Hooks focus on the youth is not his only passion. He aims to “reach out to the community”, because he feels that the “church really has to step up to the plate at this point”. He hopes to partner with other ministries in the area in the very near future.

In the next five to 10 years Hooks hopes to be able to reach individuals that are sick and shut in through live streaming. People that want to hear the word of God, but who are physically incapable will have the opportunity to tune into church services along with the rest of the church family.

Hooks sees the vision manifesting into something spectacular. “We are really going back to where we were in the early to late 60's where anyone could come to the church for whatever they needed. I think we're going back in that direction.”

Joel Peebles Loses Court Battle Over Jericho

By **George Barnette**
AFRO Staff Writer

Joel Peebles, son of the late Apostle Betty Peebles and Bishop James R. Peebles, lost his court battle over the right to the church and its entities after a Prince George's County Circuit Court judge ruled that the church rightfully belonged to its board of trustees.

Judge Dwight Jackson ruled that Gloria Magruder, Denise Killen, Clarence Jackson, Dorothy Williams and Clifford Boswell constituted the board of trustees and the rightful people in charge of Jericho's finances.

He also issued a permanent injunction barring Peebles and his co-defendant, William Meadows, from “interfering with the day to day operations or collection of tithes, offerings or any other monies” of Jericho while forcing the two men to transfer all rights to the board including any money they collected at or on behalf of Jericho.

The decision brought an end to a bitter fight that lasted for nearly a year. Jericho, unlike many of the area's other mega churches managed to survive the economic downturn with its diversity in economic engines. The church runs Jericho Christian Academy, a private school with students from pre-K through the sixth grade; a bible college; Jericho Residences, a luxury community for senior citizens and sells parking spaces to fans attending Washington Redskins home games.

The two sides made an attempt at mediation, but that effort failed exposing Peebles to rumors about his mother's confidence (or lack thereof) in his ability to lead, as well as questions about his personal finances after foreclosure proceedings began on a property he owned in Baltimore.

Peebles contended the church rightfully belonged to him, but his mother left the church's finances to the board of trustees in a secret will.

The AFRO has obtained a copy of that will in which Betty Peebles outlined the steps her son needed to take to receive any portion of his trust.

“Joel must place himself under the spiritual tutelage of the Pastor of the Spirit of Faith Christian Center, currently Dr. Michael A. Freeman, at the sanctuary location determined by the Pastor, for not less than one year or more than two years as determined by the Pastor (which may be extended if additional time is required to pursue a doctoral divinity degree),” the will read.

“During the period of spiritual tutelage under and as assigned by the Pastor, Joel shall be required to attend and/or successfully complete biblical studies either at a local seminary, bible institute or other institution of biblical study as assigned by the Pastor,” it continued.

The will also required that Peebles get written confirmation from Freeman upon completion of his tutelage and deliver it to the trustee.

Peebles will continue to serve as assistant pastor.



Courtesy Photo/Jericho City of Praise
Pastor Joel Peebles

Associated Black Charities & Wells Fargo Present Girls Night Out

GirlTalk

An evening of female empowerment, health/wellness secrets, networking and fun featuring Dr. Iyanla Vanzant.



Spiritual Life Coach and NY Times Bestselling Author of *Peace from Broken Pieces*

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includes copy of Dr. Iyanla Vanzant's latest book and an autograph/photo opportunity with the author



Purchase tickets at www.abc-md.org or call Gloria Smith at 443-524-7706.

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